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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) An image processing method for performing image processing on image data comprising:

generating face region information to identify the face region from said image data; and
performing noise reduction on the face region of said image data based on said face region information,

wherein said noise reduction is selectively performed based on an operating mode of a device performing said image processing.

2. (Currently amended) A digital camera comprising:

an image processing unit that performs ~~means for performing~~ image processing including contour correction on a shot image;

a face region identification unit that analyzes ~~means for analyzing~~ an image after the contour correction to generate face region information to identify the face region;

a noise reduction unit that performs ~~means for performing~~ noise reduction on the face region of the image after the contour correction based on said face region information;

a photography ~~photographing~~ mode determination unit that determines ~~means for determining~~ the photography ~~photographing~~ mode of said shot image; and

a control unit that operates ~~means for operating~~ said face region identification unit ~~identifying means~~ and said noise reduction unit ~~means~~ depending on said photography ~~photographing~~ mode.

3. (Currently amended) The digital camera according to claim 2, further comprising:

a photography mode switch on a main body of said camera.

wherein said photography mode determination unit ~~means~~ determines said photography mode based on a mode selection signal from the photography mode switch on the camera main

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body.

4. (Currently amended) The digital camera according to claim 2, wherein said control unit ~~means~~ operates said face region identification unit ~~identifying means~~ and said noise reduction unit ~~means~~ based on a portrait mode determined by said photography mode determination unit ~~means~~.

5. (Currently amended) The digital camera according to claim 2, wherein said control unit ~~means~~ operates said face region identification unit ~~identifying means~~ and said noise reduction unit ~~means~~ based on a high-speed photography mode determined by said photography mode determination unit ~~means~~.

6. (Currently amended) An image processing program executable by a computer to perform an image processing method for performing image processing on image data, said method comprising: program causing a computer to serve as means for
generating face region information to identify the face region from said image data; and
means for
performing noise reduction on the face region of the image data,
wherein said noise reduction is selectively performed based on an operating mode of a device performing said image processing.

7. (Currently amended) The digital camera according to claim 4, wherein said control unit ~~means~~ operates said face region identification unit ~~identifying means~~ and said noise reduction unit ~~means~~ based on a high-speed photography mode determined by said photography mode determination unit ~~means~~.

8. (New) The digital camera according to claim 2, wherein said noise reduction unit performs noise reduction exclusively on said face region using a low-pass filter.

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9. (New) The digital camera according to claim 2, wherein said face region comprises a plurality of face regions, said face region identification unit identifying said plurality of face regions and said noise reduction unit performing noise reduction on said plurality of face regions.

10. (New) The digital camera according to claim 2, wherein said control unit controls said face region identification unit and said noise reduction unit such that said analyzing said information to identify said face region and said noise reduction are not performed when a mode other than a high-speed photography mode and a portrait mode are determined by said photography mode determination unit.

11. (New) The digital camera according to claim 2, further comprising:
a shutter button and an operation switch which are connected to said control unit,
wherein said control unit performs control including at least one of automatic focus, automatic exposure, and automatic white balance based on an input from one of said shutter button and said operation switch.

12. (New) The digital camera according to claim 2, further comprising:
a lens comprising an automatic focus mechanism.

13. (New) The digital camera according to claim 12, further comprising:
a charge-coupled device (CCD) in a position corresponding to a focal point of said lens.

14. (New) The digital camera according to claim 13, further comprising:
an analog signal processor for performing analog processing on a picture signal which is output from said CCD, and outputting RGB signals corresponding to said picture signal.

15. (New) The digital camera according to claim 14, wherein said analog signal processor

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comprises a Correlated Double Sampling (CDS) circuit for performing noise reduction on said picture signal, and an Automatic Gain Control (AGC) circuit for performing level adjustment on said picture signal by way of gain adjustment.

16. (New) The digital camera according to claim 14, further comprising:
an analog-to-digital (A/D) converter which converts said RGB signals sequentially applied by the analog signal processor to digital RGB signals.
17. (New) The digital camera according to claim 16, further comprising:
a digital signal processor for converting said digital RGB signals to image data comprising luminance data and color-difference data.
18. (New) The digital camera according to claim 17, further comprising:
a memory for temporarily storing said image data.
19. (New) The digital camera according to claim 18, wherein said face region identification unit receives said image data from said memory and generates said face region information by using said image data.